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C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 001937

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/PD AND NEA/ARPI, NSC FOR ABRAMS AND DOD/OSD
FOR SCHENKER AND MATHENY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/06/2010

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAQ](#) [QA](#) [ALJAZEERA](#)

SUBJECT: GOQ REQUESTS OFFICIAL EXPLANATION OF AL-JAZEERA

ISSUE

Classified By: Ambassador Chase Untermeyer, Reasons 1.4 (B AND D)

¶1. (C) Text of diplomatic note received by Ambassador Untermeyer on 4 December 2005:

Begin Text:

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar presents its compliments to the State Department of the United States of America and has the honor to refer to the news reported on 22 November 2005 by the British newspaper "The Daily Mirror", that a Top Secret memo from the Office of the British Prime Minister Tony Blair which the paper was able to obtain, stated that during his meeting with the Prime Minister Mr. Blair in the White House on 16 April 2004, President Bush was clear on his determination to bomb the headquarters of Al-Jazeera Channel situated in Doha, and that the British Prime Minister opposed that inclination as it would have created a big problem. Also, Al-Hayat Newspaper reported on 23 November 2005 the substance of what the paper called "an American official", that "America does not need to bomb Al-Jazeera Headquarters...if we wanted to put it out of action, we could have sent two soldiers to prevent the staff from entering it!"

The Government of the State of Qatar received these news with great concern and astonishment, since it specially pursues its relations with the United States from the reality of deep friendship and alliance. Accordingly, the Government of the State of Qatar requests an official explanation of the subject as soon as possible because it touches upon the hard core of Qatari American relations which the State of Qatar is keen to proceed with its development for the interests of the two countries.

While the Ministry awaits the speedy response of the State Department of the United States of America, seizes once again this opportunity to express its highest considerations.

End Text.

¶2. (C) Embassy understands that this diplomatic note was also delivered by Ambassador Al-Khalifa to A/S Welch.

¶3. (C) Ambassador's view is that this matter warrants a more fulsome USG public response than has been offered to date. Such a statement could underscore the absurdity of the bombing statement attributed to the President by describing the many strong and positive aspects of U.S.-Qatari relations.

¶4. (C) Ambassador recommends that our official response to the GOQ include the following elements: 1) no attack on Al-Jazeera has ever been planned; 2) it is inconceivable that any military action would be taken against a friendly nation that hosts American military and civilian personnel; and 3) The GOQ is aware that U.S. Government's approach to Al-Jazeera is to encourage greater professionalism and balance in its broadcasts.

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